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IN THEOLOGY

JOHN BAILLIE, A. M.

Delivered on the Occasion of his Inauguration
as Richards Professor of Christian Theology
in Auburn Theological Seminary,
October 26, 1920.

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THE PRESENT SITUATION IN THEOLOGY

THE INAUGURAL DELIVERED IN WILLARD CHAPEL, OCTOBER 26, 1920

BY PROFESSOR JOHN BAILLIE.

FOLLOWING a well-established and not inappropriate precedent, I propose that my first lecture from the chair to which

I have today been introduced should take the form of some observations upon the present tendencies of theological enquiry. Theology in its widest sense may be provisionally defined as scientific reflection upon religious truth, and by *scientific* reflection is here meant systematic reflection the immediate object of which is rather intellectual than practical or religious satisfaction. Needless to say, there is a kind of reflection on religious topics which is not in this sense scientific but which is rather a necessary element in the religious experience even of the simplest (as we must believe it was of the most primitive) men. This distinction between the believer and the practical religious teacher or prophet on the one hand and the theologian on the other must always be kept in mind. It is true that no hard-and-fast line can be drawn between the two, just as in the case of morals it is impossible to draw a quite definite line between the moral philosopher and the man of practical moral wisdom—the σοφός and the φρονιμος of Aristotle's terminology. It is not always easy to say just where personal religious conviction and practical religious teaching end and where scientific theology begins. Nevertheless the distinction is in a general sense clear enough and is of importance for a clear understanding of the nature of our subject.

Although the scientific study of religion is a typically modern discipline, yet its beginnings reach much farther back into the history of thought than is often imagined. It is true that there is little trace of it in the literature of the Hebrews, or indeed of any of the Semitic peoples. The Hebrew "Wisdom" Literature has sometimes been represented as containing a sort of religious philosophy, but such a view will not bear examination. The Hebrew *hakam*, in this usage, comes much nearer to meaning what the Greeks meant by φρονιμος than what they meant by σοφός. Much more nearly approximating to what we mean by theology was the Rabbinic instruction of later Judaism, but after all it amounted to no more than the interpretation of the Old Testament—or perhaps even, as Jesus said, the making the Old Testament

of none effect by tradition. When, however, we pass to the Greek thinkers, there can be no doubt that we are able to recognize the true scientific interest of theological enquiry. "We may fairly say," says Edward Caird, "that the beginning of theology is to be found in Greek philosophy; for it was in Greece that reflection first became free, and at the same time systematic." Perhaps we should acknowledge its presence as early as Xenophanes the Ionian whose attacks on the mythological polytheism of Homer and Hesiod as well as on the popular religious practices of the Egyptians seem certainly—though couched in poetical terms—to have been made in the interests of a reasonable understanding of things divine. But it is in Plato—or, if you will, in the Platonic Socrates—that the study of religion first comes clearly to its own. Plato's *Euthyphro* is neither more nor less than an attempt to throw light on the problem of the definition of religion. In the *Laws* two arguments for the existence of God are put forward, arguments which one may still hear defended—the argument from design (or order) and the argument *e consensu gentium*. And other theological problems are dealt with in the *Timaeus*, the *Phaedrus* and other dialogues of Plato's later life. This Platonic tradition was considerably developed by Aristotle and was afterwards kept alive in the various Post-Aristotelian schools, particularly among the Stoics; until, by the time of the birth of Christianity, theological speculation was everywhere current within Greek civilization. Dating from this general period, for instance, are the writings of Panaetius of Rhodes, the recently-discovered treatise of Philodemus *Concerning Piety*, the elaborate text-books of Posidonius, and the many theological treatises of Plutarch, of which the most interesting is perhaps that *Concerning Isis and Osiris*—an attempt at a symbolical interpretation of religious beliefs which, if the anachronism be allowed, is even a little in the manner of Hegel. The final stage of this development, culminating as it does in the great writers of Neo-platonism, overlaps the Christian period by several centuries. If we turn from Greek to Roman scholarship we find the same main influences present, only that Stoicism rather than Platonism seems here to have been always the dominating school. The most important name is perhaps that of Marcus Terentius Varro, a man of real learning whose *Antiquitates Rerum Divinarum* has, however, come down to us only in fragments. Varro was probably chief among the many sources for Cicero's comparatively second-rate treatise

De Natura Deorum, and the indications are that he was a writer of a more serious, if also of a less imaginative, turn of mind than his more illustrious follower. The word employed by Varro for the study of religion is the word we still use—*theologia*, and it is of course clear that he borrowed it from the earlier Greek scholars who had originally spoken of this branch of science as ο περι θεου λογος. Indeed it is probable that it is to Aristotle that the credit for the compound word in its present usage must be given. But Varro, like his elder contemporary Scaevola, had advanced so far in his science as to distinguish three different kinds of theology—three different attitudes which may be taken towards things divine. There is first mythical theology, which adopts more or less the attitude of the poets towards things divine; there is also civil theology, which looks upon religion as fostering the good of the state and therefore recognizes a different religious code for every state or people. But the theology which Varro himself would follow is neither mythical nor civil theology, but what (evidently following some Greek writer) he calls *natural theology*. By natural theology he meant just what has been meant by it to our own day—the attempt to reach the truth about God by speculative means from a consideration of the natural world and in total abstraction from actual historical religion. It is clear that it is along this line of enquiry alone that Varro hopes for any real light upon the truth of religion.

Thus it came about that the theologians of the Early and Middle Christian Ages had two traditions behind them—the religion that had come to them from Palestine, where, however, there had been no systematic theology; and the beginnings of systematic theological study that had come from Greece and Rome, which countries, however, had little to give them of living religion. And on the whole it is surprising how little that was really fresh the Christian scholars had to add to this heritage. It is true that more originality may lie buried behind the apparent conservatism of some of the early Fathers and some of the Scholastic theologians than the general forms of their thought might lead us to suspect. But it remains true that the really important contributions of these ages to the progress of the human spirit lay in different fields. Throughout all the Middle Ages the Hebrew-Christian tradition remained sacrosanct, the light of the living religious consciousness never being brought critically to bear upon it. All other religions, all

other manifestations of the religious consciousness suffered almost complete neglect at the hands of scholars, being regarded rather as false and priestly inventions than as the fruit of an honest groping for the truth. The dialectical thrust-and-parry of those dialogues between Christian and Saracen or Jew which bulked so largely in mediaeval apologetics and which found their climax in St. Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Contra Gentiles*, does not really form an exception. The only real ray of light from the outside that was allowed into the scholastic theological mind was the Graeco-Roman natural theology. This latter, it is true, was diligently developed, notably by Anselm and the great Schoolmen of the thirteenth century, but its study was thought vitiated by the artificial attempt to show its entire coincidence (so far as it went) with the Christian teaching; the complete harmony of 'natural' and 'revealed' religion being the dominating presupposition of mediaeval thought.

The Protestant Reformation changed many of these things, but the change was not so radical or so far-reaching as might be supposed. The early Protestant orthodoxy had no more interest in the extra-Christian religious consciousness than had that Scholasticism which it so hated, nor was its attitude to its own traditions any less dogmatic. Sacrosanct authority still blocked the way for free enquiry. Certainly this applies rather to the Post-Reformation ages when the Reformers' principles became hardened into a new orthodoxy than it does to the more wide-awake Reformers themselves. Luther's complete rejection of the natural theology of the Middle Ages enabled him to enunciate and utilize certain new principles of theological method from which we have still something to learn. Nevertheless not even Luther can be regarded as having contributed anything of a fundamental nature to the progress of theological enquiry, nor as marking any epoch-making change in its methods. This has been recently insisted on by Dr. McGiffert of New York in more than one of his learned volumes, and I am glad of the authoritative support which his statements have given to what has long been my own impression. "The impulses which controlled Luther," says Dr. McGiffert, "were never those of the scholar, the scientist, or the philosopher. He cared little for clearness and consistency of thought. A satisfactory and adequate world-view was none of his concern. Of intellectual curiosity he had scarcely any; of interest in truth for truth's sake none at all At a time when the spirit of the

modern age was beginning to make itself felt in the religious thinking of his contemporaries, and questions as to the truth of traditional doctrines were widespread, he remained entirely without intellectual difficulties His confidence in the Catholic system was absolute, and his acceptance of its tenets complete, until he was shaken out of it by practical considerations which had nothing to do with theology and were not in the least of an intellectual order. Under these circumstances it is a mistake to think of him as a theologian and of his work as a reformation in theology His interest was wholly in the practical religious life, and all the differences between him and his Catholic contemporaries were simply the consequence of a radical divergence in this sphere." It may be that some of Dr. McGiffert's phrases savour of over-statement, but the truth of his main contention must be clear to all modern students of the great Reformer's life and writings. It was thus left to a much later age to introduce a new era of theological enquiry: an age separated by only two or three generations from our own: an age heralded as from afar by such men as Spinoza and Rousseau and the participants in the English Deistic controversies, but which had to wait for its real initiation for Kant and Schleiermacher and Coleridge and their older and younger contemporaries. So it has come to pass that it is only in our own day that work is being done which at last, as belonging to a definitely new epoch, renders completely antiquated the researches and the guesses and the methods of the Graeco-Roman ancients.

The coming of this new era in theological study has been made possible by the changed attitude towards ecclesiastical and scriptural tradition. If you had questioned any old-time theologian, no matter whether Roman Catholic or Protestant, as to our ultimate source of knowledge and of certainty concerning things divine, he would have answered, very much in the words of Calvin, that it was the *testimonium spiritus sancti*, the witness of the Holy Spirit in the heart of man. With this we have no quarrel. It is, so far as it goes, the answer we must still give, and is in no way improved upon or made more definite by the mere substitution of another phrase such as "the promptings of the religious consciousness." But if we pursued our questioning a little further, we should soon discover how rigidly the application of this principle was limited, though in divergent ways, by Protestant and Catholic

alike. The Protestant would say that the witness of the Spirit in the hearts of believers was virtually confined to a testimony to the divine origin and verbal authoritativeness of the sacred literature of Christianity. The Roman Catholic would narrow down the Spirit's operations still further, and would hold that His direct testimony was vouchsafed, not to each individual believer, but only to the official Church, or—as a modern Roman Catholic would say—only to the Pope. Thus, for all practical purposes, the sole source of religious knowledge became for the Protestant the *ipsissima verba* of the Hebrew and Greek scriptures, and for the Roman Catholic the ex cathedra utterances of the Roman Pontiff. And the whole modern impulse to the study of religion comes from the breaking up of these two external authorities: in other words, from our regained conviction that the testimony of the Spirit of God in the heart of man is granted not to the Pope alone but to all men, and bears witness to more and other things than the inerrancy of our sacred books.

It is clear that the traditional reliance upon external authority was in effect an immense simplification of the theological problem, and now that we no longer share that reliance our task is correspondingly—and, indeed, out of all comparison—more difficult. It was therefore not unnatural that when the belief in the sufficiency of authority as the final source of religious knowledge began to crumble, the first impulse was to distrust the truth-value of historical religious belief altogether and to have recourse to the only alternative that seemed to present itself, namely, the natural or philosophical theology which, as we have seen, had originated among the Greeks and been considerably developed by the great masters of Scholasticism. This rejuvenated philosophical theology has taken various forms. It has appeared as English Deism (or at least as a certain school of it), as the Rational Theology of the German Enlightenment, as the 'Philosophy of Religion' of Hegelianism and Neo-Hegelianism, as the speculative scepticism of Hume and John Stuart Mill and as the typically Anglo-Saxon speculative theism of writers like Robert Flint and Dr. James Ward and the present Dean of Carlisle. That is a great array of names and of movements and one which certainly cannot, without grievous injustice, be subsumed under a common rubric. Yet it cannot be denied that they all share certain fundamental assumptions in virtue of which it is natural to group them together in a general

way. They are all at one in their belief that the only entirely satisfactory certainty about things divine is to be sought along the line of natural-scientific or philosophical enquiry which goes to work in basic independence of the direct utterances of the religious consciousness itself. And the favorite form taken by theological study within these schools has been that of the so-called 'Philosophy of Religion,' in which the truth-value either of the beliefs of one particular religion or of certain supposedly fundamental beliefs common to many religions has been tested and verified by reference to a cosmological scheme not itself inspired by those beliefs, or at all events by means of arguments the premisses of which are drawn from a sphere of experience other than the religious. Some of these arguments are of an abstract epistemological nature, such as the Ontological, which goes back to Anselm, and the Berkleian argument, recently elevated once more to the first place by Pfeiderer and Dean Rashdall. But the favorite arguments have always been rather those drawn from the realm of natural science, such as the argument from design and the argument from the *contingentia mundi* to a First Cause. And indeed it has been characteristic of this whole approach to the theological problem that it has thought it possible to proceed from nature to God, as if the divine in nature, instead of being discoverable only to the man who had already found the divine in his own soul, could itself be the premiss from a consideration of which one is first able to rise to a sure knowledge of God.

Now it might be argued that to support religious belief by exhibiting its coincidence with the proper results of an enlightened metaphysic and natural science is not really to support it by external buttresses, because it is on a more intuitive grasp of these same arguments that the religious conviction of the ordinary Christian itself rests. Such a contention, however, will hardly bear examination. Nobody could hold that the Christian certainty rests (as does the Berkleian argument) on the realization of the instability of sense-impressions. To say that the ethnic belief in God rests on considerations drawn *e consensu gentium* would obviously be a vicious circle. The Ontological argument, again, cannot be made to represent a process of thought which bears any resemblance to the process in which faith actually originates without undergoing considerable sympathetic re-interpretation: and when so interpreted, it will be found to proceed from a premiss for which

no purely epistemological justification can be found. As to the arguments from the natural world, I can only repeat that the main thought to which they give expression—God in nature—would seem to represent, not the basis on which faith rests, but a perception arising out of a faith already established. And, indeed, the speculative theologians have seldom put forward the view which I am criticising—the view, I mean, that religious conviction is based on an intuitive apprehension of the very arguments which speculation uses. Rather have they failed to find any difficulty in believing that the reasonable grounds by which faith can be justified bear no relation to the interior sources of its own assurance. Dean Rashdall, for instance, says, “It is of the utmost importance to distinguish between the process by which psychologically a man arrives at a religious or other truth and the reasons which make it true . . . The religious belief of the vast majority of persons has always rested, and must always rest, very largely upon tradition, education, environment, authority of one kind or another—authority supported or confirmed by a varying measure of independent reflection or experience.” That puts very well the view that has most commonly been taken by speculative theology.

An exception to which I must for a moment turn aside is, however, to be found in the theology—or, as they call it, philosophy of religion—of the Hegelian school. Hegel agrees with all the other speculative theologians of whom I have been speaking in teaching that the final justification of religious belief must lie in its coincidence with the conclusions of philosophy, but he goes on to affirm that religion has all along been saying in the picture-language of immediate feeling what philosophy only now at last is able to express in terms of reasoned insight; and he admits fully that philosophy could never have said anything at all if religion had not said it first. To that extent, therefore, Hegel had genuinely broken with the traditions of the Enlightenment and may be held in some measure to mark the transition to that new point of view which was to treat more seriously the evidential value of the actual or positive religious conviction itself. Yet, after all, it cannot be denied that Hegel regards philosophy as being able to improve upon the account which religion gives of things divine, the philosophical account being the more adequate one and more nearly representing the truth. It is clear, however, that a philosophy which is able to criticise religion cannot itself be wholly grounded on religion. As a matter of fact,

Hegel's critique of religion is carried on by reference to an ontological system which, as regards those aspects of it in respect of which he finds religion lacking, was suggested to him by a study of regions of experience other than the religious. The Hegelian philosophy of religion, therefore, is valuable and significant so far as it is genuinely based upon an attentive regard to the voice of faith itself, but it still belongs to the old school so far as it presumes to criticise faith in the light of an independently established system or (in a phrase used in this reference by Hegel himself in the first pages of his *Logic*) "from its own independent resources."

There is, however, another point of view from which, in the interests of a true analysis of the religious consciousness, we are compelled to pass judgment upon the account which the Hegelians give of it. Is it psychologically true, we must ask, that the philosophical and the religious *interests* are the same or that the questions which religion claims to answer are the same as those raised, and to some degree answered, by philosophy? Can we really believe that the part which religion plays in human life is correctly estimated when religion is represented as being a sort of popular metaphysics? In order to be convinced of the perversity of any such view, I think we need do no more here than remind ourselves of the very different ways in which religion and philosophy began in the history of our race. Religion began when our rude forefathers, hard pressed to maintain the things that were dearest to them against the thousand hazards and menaces of savage life, refused to believe that the powers which controlled their destiny were either irreconcilably inimical or stubbornly indifferent to their highest tribal or individual welfare. How philosophy began we are fortunately able to say with some accuracy, because we have reliable, if fragmentary, historical information as to how it began in Europe. It began when, in the sixth century B. C., a number of Ionian scholars, very clearly inspired by what we should now call scientific curiosity and what even they themselves may already have called the love of wisdom, set themselves to enquire what the universe was made of; and when Thales (the earliest of them) said it was made of water, and Anaximander said it was made of *το απειρον*—a Boundless Something, and Anaximenes said it was made of air. Now it may be true that the early Greek philosophers were not always able clearly to keep before themselves the difference between the two enquiries—the religious, which even in their own

day had already had a long history, and the philosophical, of which they themselves were the originators; and we saw above that in Plato we already have the beginnings of the fateful attempt to substitute philosophy for religion. But it is clear that the two, even in their intermingling, remain easily distinguishable and that, as Professor Burnet says, "with Thales and his successors a new thing came into the world." If we ask how this fundamental difference between the philosophical and the religious points of view is best to be represented, our answer must be that the religious interest is essentially and characteristically a *practical* one. The Latin poet who said that religion begins in fear—*primum in orbe deos fecit timor*—was doubtless wrong, but he was in this respect nearer the truth than those who would say that like philosophy it begins in the sense of wonder. This important fact of the practical character of religion has often been noticed both by anthropologists like Dr. Leuba and by philosophers like Mr. Bradley, but almost as often its full theological significance has been missed. To take it in earnest is to realize with Kant that the source of religious insight is to be looked for not in the theoretical but in the practical reason: not in the scientific but in the moral consciousness: not in the observation of facts but in the appreciation of values. A philosophy stands or falls according as it succeeds in explaining the world as we know it: a religion stands or falls according as it gets its moral values right and provides a cosmic atmosphere in which these values may breathe and grow and fructify.

Perhaps, however, I have devoted too much time to the Hegelian attempt to represent religion as itself based on a lower kind of philosophical insight, for, as I have said, the commoner resource of the speculative theologians has been the alternative one of discounting the evidential value of religious certainty and supposing philosophy at a later stage to supply for the first time real logical justification for religious belief. It is, indeed, almost impossible to exaggerate the influence which this sceptical separation of the subjective grounds of religious assurance from the objective grounds of theological validity has had upon the development of theological study in the last two generations. There is one consequence which I am especially concerned to point out. If the philosophical study of religion is to proceed without reference to the actual subjective processes by which faith has as a matter of fact arisen and developed in the mind of men, it clearly does not include within its pur-

view everything in religion which can be made the object of exact investigation. When we have read all that the speculative theologians have to say about the proofs of the existence of God or of immortality, such questions as the following are still left quite unanswered on our hands. What first led men to believe in God? What lent to their belief so passionate an assurance? By what stages, and guided by what inward impulse, did men advance from belief in local and tribal deities to the ethical monotheism of Christianity? What were the principles controlling that development? What, again, is the source alike of that urgent need of God and of that apparently overmastering certainty of God which characterizes the saints of our own as of every other age? And how, finally, am I to analyze and give account of my own fundamental conviction "that nothing walks with aimless feet" or "that somehow good will be the final goal of ill"?

From the attempt to answer some of these questions has arisen the new branch of study which is known as the science of religion and which has been developed under that name and along largely similar lines by Max-Müller, Tiele, Burnouf, Reville and a great many other scholars of almost equal repute. Much valuable work has been done by this school, and yet it is impossible not to feel that its work is vitiated by a sort of initial scepticism. Far too much of what it has to say about the phenomenology of religion gives the impression of being written from the point of view of a man who had never found the secret of religion in his own experience. Sometimes, indeed, there is a definite "positivistic" attempt to explain the phenomena of religion without finding it necessary to suppose the presence of any specifically religious impulse or—more accurately—any directly religious insight into the ultimate character of things: an attempt exactly parallel to those made by writers like Dr. Westermarck (and indeed by the Utilitarians) to explain our moral ideas in terms of entirely non-moral needs and impulses and so without the necessity of positing any primary moral element in our consciousness or in the nature of things. And even when, as in the case of Tiele and Max-Müller, this attempt is not made, sufficient weight is never given to the fact that the only key which can unlock for us the secrets of the religious consciousness, or bring either order or meaning into the apparently confused medley of world-religion, is the faith we find in our own hearts. "Were I" says Tiele, "to ex-

press my full religious conviction, I should confess that true religion, the religion of humanity, has been revealed in Christ . . . But this is a matter of faith, and I must here maintain my purely scientific and impartial position." The question which immediately suggests itself, however—without prejudice to the particular point under dispute—is whether it is scientific to leave one's faith out of account when it is precisely faith (i. e. religious belief) that is the object of study. Even Dr. Jastrow, the eminent Assyriologist, in his book on *The Study of Religion* warns us repeatedly against "the fallacious attitude of those who would make their own religious predilections the criterion of religious truth"—as if they could logically do otherwise without thereby giving up their predilections, and as if any criterion were conceivably to be found by them which was entirely and generically different even from the most individual of their "predilections." It is as hopeless to suppose that any merely external study of the facts of the various religions should enable us to grasp the true internal principles of their development and classification as it would be to suppose that we could understand the rationale of the development of modern music, and be able to say which influences in it were forward-moving and which were reactionary, if we ourselves were conscious of no standard of musical taste. The understanding of religion, like so much else that is good, must always begin at home. All intelligent analysis of religious phenomena is at heart analysis of one's own experience, or at least it is to that experience that we must go for the guiding thread.

The truth is that this new 'Science of Religion' is a hybrid science, and to read even the best text-book of it—that of Tiele—is to be aware of a vacillation between many different points of view. The only true science of religion is theology, just as the true theology must be the science of religion—the systematic exposition of the nature and grounds of man's faith in the Unseen. Similarly there can only be one science of morals—the science commonly called ethics; and as surely as only failure could meet the endeavor to establish side by side with ethics another science of morals which went to work in disinterested abstraction from living moral conviction, so surely can no success await the endeavor to pursue the study of religion in abstraction from living faith as we know it in our own experience.

There is one other claimant to the dignity of a new science which I must notice and which in large measure owes its separate existence to this same dualism between the subjective grounds of faith and the philosophical justification of it. In the passage quoted above Dean Rashdall said that "it is of the utmost importance to distinguish between the process by which psychologically a man arrives at a religious . . . truth and the reasons which make it true." Now if we accept that distinction as fundamental, and accordingly confine our philosophical theology to dealing with the second term of it, there will remain over for treatment in a separate branch of theological study "the process by which psychologically a man arrives at a religious truth." So has arisen the so-called Psychology of Religion. Under the aegis of this new name not a little valuable work has been done and not a few problems of great importance have been brought into prominence for the first time. Especially the psychological study of adolescent religion has been of great practical help in religious education. Yet I think it has been very widely felt that this science also is vitiated by what I must again call the initial scepticism or quasi-scepticism of its point of view, and the perplexing difficulties of the method of enquiry usually pursued in it have been as frequently pointed out. To judge from the most characteristic and influential products of it, it seems to deny itself the equipment of any epistemological principle such as would enable it to distinguish the significant from the valueless, the true from the false. It accepts the most hysterical religious experiences and the most vapid religious ideas as readily as the more normal experiences and the calmer self-analyses of the finest souls among us. They are all alike "experience," and as such of equal value as initial psychological data for the student. Indeed, the pathological experiences even seem to be accorded an added importance as being more palpable, perhaps also as being more vivid. "The sentimentality of many of my documents," says William James, "is a consequence of the fact that I sought them among the extravagances of the subject." "It always leads," the same writer tells us again, "to a better understanding of a thing's significance to consider its exaggerations and perversions." There is no doubt a modicum of truth lurking behind the view expressed in this latter sentence, but one wonders again what a moralist would think if he were offered in the name of a new science of the Psychology of Morals a purely disinterested and even statistical

collection of the more accessible moral soul-stirrings and notions, no matter whether psychopathic or normal, sentimental or sober, affected or sincere, of the people about him. That is not the way in which the psychology of morals is written. It *has* been written and well written, as by Mr. Bosanquet in his *Psychology of the Moral Self*, or, for that matter, by Aristotle and Bishop Butler and Price and Reid and Kant. But there are three respects in which it differs from the hypothetical psychology of morals which I have been imagining: first, it is more introspective than observational or statistical; secondly, its whole endeavor is, by means of the standard found in one's own moral consciousness to distinguish the significant and true from the abnormal and false; and thirdly, and consequently, it is not in the end distinguishable from the science of ethics itself.

I believe that, in like manner, the true psychology of religion is not ultimately distinguishable from systematic or scientific theology. The central questions it must raise are such as these: What is the psychological nature of religious faith? Where in the human mind is the seat of religious assurance? How am I to analyze my irrepressible feeling that the materialistic view of the world does not tell half of the truth? Is it really only feeling in the narrower sense, or does it rather spring from a quite distinct kind of insight, or is it merely that the wish is father to the thought? And these are just the most central and vital questions which theology itself has to raise. Thus a profounder psychology of religion than much of what officially bears that name may be found in the writings of some of the best theologians such as Herrmann and Gaston Frommel and—one may almost add—the Augustine of the *Confessions*. For in a true theology the reasons which are offered for the justification of faith can be none other than those which originally inspired that faith and which cause it still to be believed and preached with so passionate and intense a conviction.

I have now tried to show you how two different groups of modern students of religion—those connected with the terms 'Science of Religion' and 'Psychology of Religion' respectively—have tended to vitiate their starting-point by the same externalism, i. e., by the same refusal to utilize the internal standards of religious judgment for the selection, classification and interpretation of phenomena which can otherwise only appear as a confused jumble or a bewildering panorama. And I have tried to show also how in each

case this abandonment of what might be called the epistemological point of view for the merely empirical one was due (wherever it was not merely the index of a total disbelief in religion) to the relegation of the epistemological question to scientific philosophy. It is worth noting, however, that in each case the history of theological enquiry has provided us with an exception to this latter generalization. At least one student of world-religion and at least one student of the psychology of religion have, while holding fast to the purely observational and empirical method of enquiry, nevertheless completely opposed themselves to the attempts of philosophy to supply an independent justification of religious belief, and have rather supposed themselves able to elicit a standard of truth out of their rigidly empirical and external contemplation of the multiplicity of phenomena. With their recognition that the settlement of theological issues is to be attained rather by listening to the voice of religious conviction itself than by a metaphysical enquiry *de novo*, I am in hearty sympathy. Where I cannot follow them is in supposing that a merely external attentiveness to that voice (as if it spoke only to other men and in strange tongues, instead of making its constraint felt in their hearts) can lead them to any conclusions of a constructive character.

The student of world-religion to which I refer is Lord Herbert of Cherbury, often spoken of somewhat loosely as the founder of Deism; and, as he is not a modern writer, he need not hold us long. His method was very simple. It consisted merely in extricating the Highest Common Factor of all known religions and in accepting these universally-acknowledged beliefs as true. Such beliefs, said Lord Herbert, are principally five—that a Supreme Being exists, that he ought to be worshipped, that the principal part of his worship is moral virtue, that moral faults are to be expiated by repentance, and that God will apportion rewards and punishments for our actions both now and in a future life. The student of the psychology of religion whom I have in mind is William James, whose brilliant and impressive work, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* I have already had occasion to quote. Up to a certain point James' view is almost identical with Herbert's; with this characteristic difference—that whereas Herbert's quest is for that which is common to the doctrinal codes of the various religions, James seeks rather that which is common to the personal religious experience of the various distinguishable psychic types. His conclusion is that

religious experience always consists of two parts; an uneasiness or "a sense that there is something wrong about us as we naturally stand," and a solution of that uneasiness in "a sense that we are saved from the wrongness by making proper connection with the higher powers." It is very instructive to compare this result, and especially the lengthier statement of it at the beginning of Chapter XX of the *Varieties*, with that of Herbert. But the nature of James' inference from the universality of these beliefs to their truth is different from that of the seventeenth-century thinker. According to Herbert, the beliefs must, because they are universal, be native to the human mind, and as native to the human mind, they must be true. What James argues is rather that the experiences in which these beliefs have their rise are not otherwise explicable *to the observer* than by supposing the presence of some higher power. The former method of inference is historically known as the Theory of Innate Ideas and may be taken to have finally succumbed to the criticism of Locke. The latter method has sometimes been given the name of Psychologism and about its value I shall say only this: that it is surely impossible to believe that a psychologist without any religious experience of his own could be led from a consideration of the experiences of other people to a more surely-grounded religious faith than that of those of whose experiences he had taken cognizance. But, before leaving William James, I would like to add that my disagreement with him reaches also to the most important of his particular psychological conclusions about religion. I believe he is wrong in making the intellectual element in religion secondary to the affectional element. I believe he is wrong in finding any necessary and determinative connection between religion and the sub-conscious self. And I believe that both mistakes are largely due to that same false start which made him seek his facts "among the extravagances of the subject." The extravagances of *any* subject of human interest will reveal such a welter of sentimentality and such a hypnotisation of the intellect as James has found in the extravagances of religion. It is not of the religious man as such, but of the psychopath as such (whether saint or lover, patriot or aesthete) that the primacy of emotion and the dominance of the sub-conscious are characteristic marks. And as for religion, we must surely believe that

"The gods approve
The depth and not the tumult of the soul."

I hope that the doubts I have expressed about the legitimacy of the several theological standpoints which I have now passed under review will have done much to lighten the final part of my task, which is the characterization of the point of view to which I would venture to ally myself. I think that in one or other of its forms it is the dominant point of view at the present time and the one from the adoption of which most new light is now being hoped for by those interested in theological enquiry. It goes back for its real initiation to the two great names of Kant and Schleiermacher, the former of whom is almost universally regarded as the originator of the present epoch in European thought generally and the latter of whom is commonly referred to—indeed in every other new theological publication one takes up—as the father of modern theology. But just as the modern philosophy which Kant rendered possible has advanced a long way beyond the letter of Kant's theory, so the theology for which Schleiermacher's *Glaubenslehre* provided the initial inspiration has long ago left behind it the majority of Schleiermacher's particular conclusions. There is, of course, no need for us to express any opinion as to the justice of the Kantian view that no kind of knowledge of ultimate reality can be gained by the employment of the theoretic reason and that speculative metaphysics is therefore faced with a hopeless task. That is a question for philosophy itself to decide. The aspect of the Kantian position which has been of such service to theology is its insistence that, whether or not metaphysical results of any kind are attainable, it is essentially wrong in principle to look to such results for the justification either of the dictates of conscience or of the doctrines of religion. And it is to this ability of religious insight to stand on its own legs, and to the consequent independence of the science of theology, that I believe it is our duty to hold fast. It is true, as I have tried to show, that to do this is to turn our backs on a tradition which is as old as Plato. Indeed the parting of the ways is perhaps to be seen as clearly as anywhere in the case of Aristotle. In several of his works Aristotle makes the distinction between Speculative or Theoretical Science and Practical Science. The central practical science is ethics, and the Aristotelian ethic is an attempt, without any philosophical preconceptions, to elicit the principles which actually guide our moral judgments. According to our view Aristotle should have followed an identically similar procedure in regard to religion. He should have endeavored by the study of the actual religious experience of

men—by the study, as the phrase now goes, of ‘positive religion’—to elicit the principles inspiring it and to examine their origin and trustworthiness. And, if he had done this, what different reading the history of mediaeval theology would have afforded us! But, as Mr. C. C. J. Webb has said, “the thinkers of Greece found in the popular religion comparatively little upon which their minds and hearts could feed, and so tended far more than the thinkers of Christendom to develop their own theology in independence of the popular religion.” “At the most,” says Edward Caird, speaking of this same period, “it could only be said that philosophy patronized the popular religion, and not that it formed a real alliance with it, still less paid it any real deference.” Thus it came about that Aristotle took the other fateful turning. The theoretical sciences, he says, are three: mathematics, physics, and ‘first philosophy’ or the science of abstract being, which as he tells us in the sixth book of the *Metaphysics*, “we may call theology (*θεολογική*), since it is obvious that if the divine is present anywhere, it is present in things of this sort.” Another parting of the ways presented itself at the beginning of the modern period, when theologians had to choose between a natural theology which followed the Aristotelian tradition and a ‘revealed’ religion which was quite uncritical. Once again the wrong turning was taken. Instead of accepting the so-called revealed religion as containing the positive stuff of experience and endeavoring for the first time to base a critical theology upon it, the first modern thinkers, as we saw, chose the way of independent speculation. For many students the alternative is still a very real one. One of the most distinguished of living English-speaking theologians once said to me, “When, as an undergraduate, the religious problem first began to press upon me, I knew I had to choose between two ways: the acceptance of the witness of faith itself and the search for speculative proof. And everything has depended on the choice I then made.”

If I were asked to express in a single sentence the pivotal consideration which has led so many theologians to adopt a new conception of the nature of their study, I should say that it was the realization that no arguments that can be adduced in support of the reality of the objects of religious faith can be of the smallest avail for the justification of religion, if they are other than the arguments which actually *inspire* faith. The only important question is whether *the religious man's own reasons* for his so passionate

belief have anything in them or no. If they have not, then religion is a delusion and a snare, for it is based on a mistake—on a sort of apprehension which even great men have mistaken for insight, but which really yields no warrantable knowledge of the truth. Nor could it alter this conclusion in the smallest degree, if the scientist should be able to show, with a considerable measure of probability, that many of the things which religious conviction had thus vainly thought itself able to establish are by a happy chance nevertheless true, because necessary for the explanation of facts belonging to other regions of experience. It would be absurd to suggest that practical religion, having mourned the disqualification of its own peculiar claim to insight, should take new heart from so doubtful a piece of luck; for this would be to propose for religious belief an immeasurably more external authority than any that orthodoxy ever proposed for it—the authority of the natural scientist or the speculative philosopher. Moreover, has even the boldest flight of independent speculation ever proved enough? The most that natural science commonly claimed to do was to prove that a Supreme Being exists. But to prove that a Supreme Being exists is not even to begin to establish the truth of religion. The smallest modicum of belief on which religion could possibly exist or ever has existed is the conviction that the interests of the Supreme Being are not wholly diverse from our own highest interests, or—to express it in a manner better suited to include the most primitive stages of religion—that the powers which control our destiny can be made to take some interest in our welfare. And not one of the “Theistic Proofs” ever proved that, nor will any proof ever prove it which seeks its premisses outside of that higher moral or spiritual nature which we can find only in man, and can understand and interpret only because (and so far as) we possess it ourselves.

The truth is that in the last resort there is only one way in which the facts of religion can profitably be studied. Natural Theology, Systematic Theology, Philosophy of Religion, The Science of Religion, Psychology of Religion—these names may sometimes have represented a practically useful division of labor, but they certainly do not represent a scientific delimitation of territory. Of course there is the entirely distinct line of study, purely historical and not at all doctrinal or constructive, which used to be known as Historical Theology, but which is now more accurately spoken of as the History of Religion. And this has its several subdivisions,

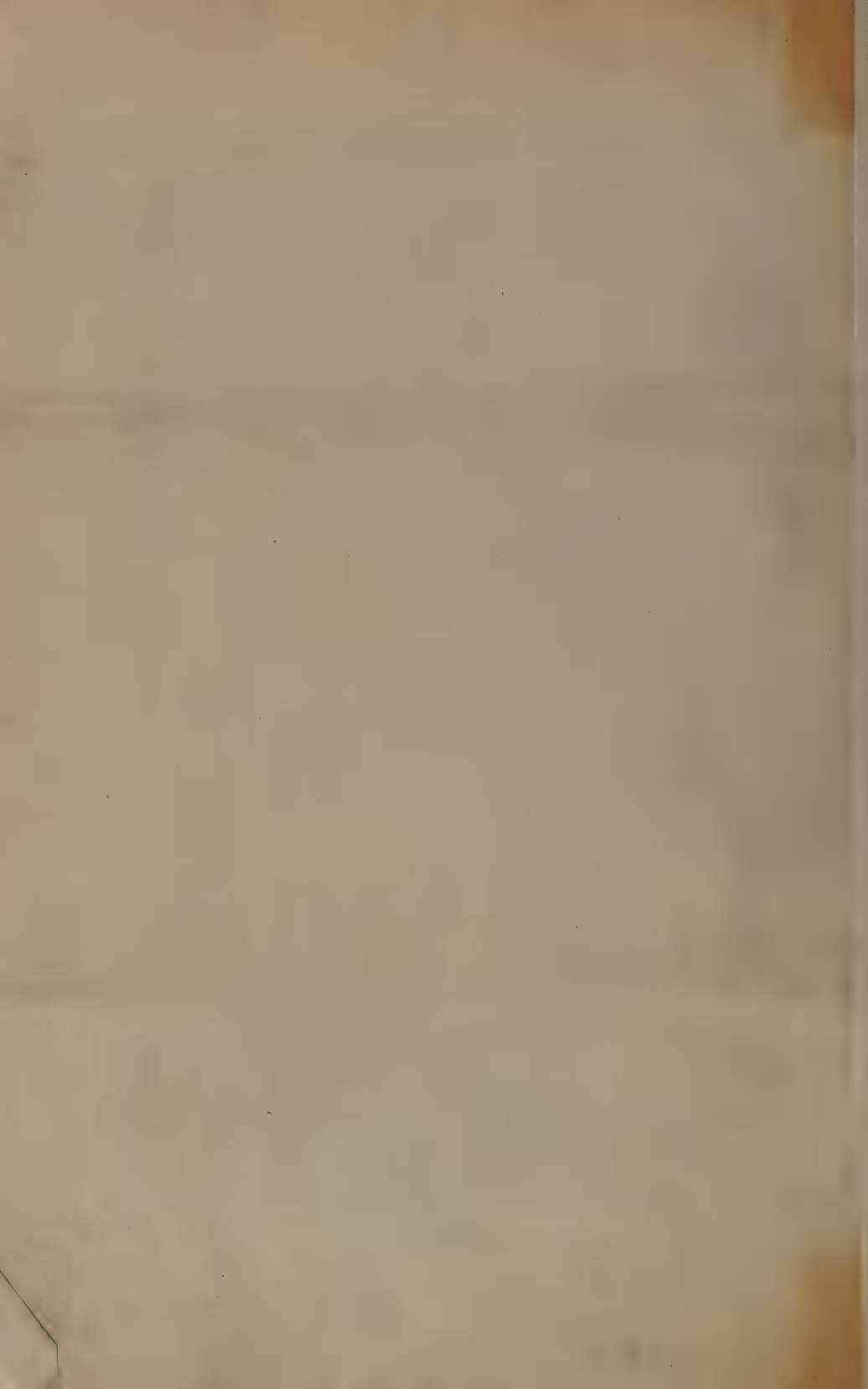
Old Testament Theology, New Testament Theology, (if we may still use these venerable terms) The History of Christian Doctrine, The History of the Christian Church, Primitive Religion, Buddhism, Islam, and so on. But what I have tried to show is that there is only one kind of study from which we can hope for any true light either upon the real character of the religious consciousness or upon the validity of its utterances. Two main courses of instruction are expected of me in my discharge of the obligations of this Chair; a course in Introduction to Theology; and a course in Theology proper, covering the whole field of religious belief. In the former it will be my duty to say, in much greater detail, as well as in a manner more suited to those who are at the beginning of their theological education, the things I have said to you to-day. In the latter I must endeavor to *use* the method which I am to-day attempting to describe—to use it for the detailed elucidation of Christian doctrine. And perhaps it may help to make my conception of that method a little clearer, if I try to say, in a final word, what I think that task will entail. I must begin by doing my best to elicit from an analytical study of our common religious consciousness or experience its central hidden spring—the central informing principle of the view of life and destiny and the world for which religion stands. I must then endeavor to indicate the stages by which the various elements in the significance of that principle have successively been grasped and to show how its full significance is at last brought out in the life and the personality and the teaching of Jesus. And finally I must attempt to decide how that central inspiring principle is most reasonably and adequately to be applied to the various regions and problems of human experience—to sin, to suffering, to service, to one's thought of the world, to one's contemplation of human history, and to death and the future; an attempt which cannot but involve a perilous steering of our course among a great variety of conflicting opinions. This must not be taken to mean, however, that the theologian is for himself independently to evolve the details of his system out of his central understanding of religion. Every wise student knows how almost wholly dependent he is in such a region on the long generations of religious seekers behind him; and above all on our Christian Bible in which more vital truth has been hammered out of the age-long experience of the race that any academic theologian is likely to exhaust. In actual practice, therefore, the theologian's unfolding

of his central principle must largely take the form of a sifting and verifying by reference to that principle of what has come down to us from the past.

Some one may still ask whether in all this we shall have succeeded in establishing the fundamental truth of religion. I would answer that at least we shall have done our best to lay bare the grounds upon which it is actually believed. For the rest I do not suppose that the academic study of theology, though it may and constantly does help to re-establish faith by removing intellectual obstacles which had threatened to stifle it, can ever originally and directly beget faith. After all, the actual *conviction* is the possession of practical piety. It can only be *communicated* to scientific theology. Nor is there any better mark of a truly scientific theology than that it refuses to go a-straying after any other source of conviction than that which lies to its hand in living faith. For it is in living faith alone that "the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."



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